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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 003122

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SUBJECT: EASTERN CAPE DIVIDED OVER ANC NOMINATIONS

REF: PRETORIA 2937

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Classified By: Charges d'Affaires Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) The Eastern Cape Province, which took a resolution endorsing President Mbeki for a third term in December 2006, now appears divided on who it will officially nominate as ANC President. Though the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) on 31 August quoted ANC Provincial Secretary Siphato Handi as saying the Eastern Cape would forward President Mbeki's name for the top position, other press reports note that the province is far from reaching a consensus. ANC National Campaign and Elections Coordinator Wande Makalima told PolOff on 2 September that out of the seven regions in the province, only "the Nelson Mandela Metro and Amathole regions are key Mbeki supporters; the other regions are not clear." Press reports have noted that the Chris Hani region, O.R. Tambo region, and Ukhahlamba regions are backing ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma.

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LOBBYING ALREADY BEGUN IN EASTERN CAPE  
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12. (C) Makalima noted that the official nomination process by provinces "will probably start in October, but that the dates haven't been set yet." Makalima's office is still in the process of auditing ANC branches, which will subsequently determine the number of voting delegates each province gets at the ANC national conference in December. (NOTE: Though Post originally heard that provincial nominations were due 20 September, the date has been pushed back most likely to allow more time for audits. END NOTE) Until the ANC officially accepts nominations, Makalima said each region in the Eastern Cape will be intensely lobbying for its preferred candidate.

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SEARCH FOR COMPROMISE DISAPPOINTS  
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13. (C) However, it appears that even regions are having a difficult time reaching consensus. On 2 September, the ANC secretary of the O.R. Tambo region, which according to

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Makalima is the most powerful in the province and has the largest number of branches, confirmed to the Sunday Times that his region is lobbying Cyril Ramaphosa to run for President in an attempt to avoid a divisive battle between Mbeki and Zuma for ANC President. Ukhahlamba region's ANC

secretary, Toto Wonga, also told the paper he would support

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Ramaphosa on the condition that Mbeki pull out of the race. Though many political pundits believe that Ramaphosa, who was Mandela's heir apparent before being edged out by Mbeki, could easily win the ANC presidency, Ramaphosa quickly put out a press release the same day noting that, "I have no interest in standing for this position." O.R. Tambo's secretary Mlamli Siyakholwa, along with the region's chairman

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Phumzile Matshoba, are now denying they ever switched from Zuma to Ramaphosa, most likely in an attempt to save face with Zuma's camp. Siyakholwa also publicly admitted on 4 September that regional leaders had met with Tokyo Sexwale, but decided not to support him.

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MBEKI CAMP ALSO MAY BE DIVIDED ON LOWER LEADERSHIP  
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¶4. (C) Press reports note that the Eastern Cape's ANC chair, Stone Sizani, and the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) are heavily pro-Mbeki, which may end up tipping the scales in his favor. However, it is still unclear who Mbeki's camp will nominate for the remaining five ANC leadership positions. According to press reports, PEC member Andile Nkuhlu widely distributed a text message last week noting that, "after intense discussions with provinces...the emerging consensus of our top six list is as follows: Mbeki for president, (Minister of Foreign Affairs Nkosazana) Dlamini-Zuma for deputy president, (ANC Secretary General Kgalema) Motlanthe for chairman, (Chairman Mosiuoa) Lekota or (presidential advisor Joel) Netshitenzhe for secretary general, (Minister of Public Works Thoko) Didiza for deputy secretary general, and (Deputy President Phumzile)

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Mlambo-Ngcuka for treasurer. The SABC, on the other hand, reported that the province would nominate Mbeki for President, Netshitenzhe for Deputy President, and "either Dlamini-Zuma or Motlanthe for chair." Like Ramaphosa, Netshitenzhe also has publicly rejected interest in any top

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ANC position, further adding that he had made this clear to Eastern Cape's PEC.

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COMMENT  
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¶5. (C) Though official tallies have not been made public, it is widely believed that Eastern Cape will continue to have the largest number of voting delegates at December's national conference. As such, an endorsement by the region holds significant weight. However, over the past five years, the region has had difficulty maintaining a united front behind anyone except former President Nelson Mandela. Even if the PEC manages to put Mbeki's name forward, it is uncertain whether it can adequately convince Eastern Cape's voting delegates (who openly squabbled at the 2002 national conference) that Mbeki is the best candidate for the ANC right now, especially since it appears that Zuma's name is being used by some as a placeholder for a compromise candidate.  
Teitelbaum